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CHARACTER.

Most lovely of loving creatures
Under the kindly skies
She seemeth, although no teachers
Have made her clever or wise ;
And you see not her common features,
Struck blind by the soul in her eyes.

HENRY W. AUSTIN.

NOTES.

THE frontispiece of this number is on the whole a fairly satisfactory example of the delicacy and the richness to be obtained in dry-point etching. Probably the most praiseworthy particular (besides its basis of admirable drawing) is, in this instance, the exquisite softness and daintiness of the outlines of the face. It is often said that outlines of the face and figure are relieved of all harshness by the structure of the skin and the minute hairs covering the surface of the human body, and Mr. Freer has achieved a genuine success by his observation and treatment of this fact.



As some of our readers may not fully understand the difference between a simple etching and a dry-point one, it may not be superfluous to explain briefly the processes. In a simple etching, a polished copper plate is covered with a ground of varnish specially prepared, and upon it the picture is drawn with an etching needle, which scratches through the varnish to the metal, leaving a complete drawing in the coating of varnish. This is then flooded with aquafortis, which bites into the copper only where the varnish is scratched away. When the fine lines become deep enough, the acid is poured off, and they are covered with varnish. The acid is repeatedly applied till all the lines are well bitten in, the heavy lines, of course,

getting the most. Any miscalculation of the strength of the acid or the time it may remain on will, of course, be fatal to success. Most etchings are afterward touched up with the dry point, but in the dry-point etching proper, no acid is used, the drawing being scratched directly upon and into the copper plate with the point. While the bite of acid produces a clean line in the plate, the cutting of the needle into the copper throws up a ridge of metal or "bur," which helps to hold the ink and adds softness and richness of effect. Some artists, while admitting the peculiar charm and value of the dry-point method, claim that the lines, on account of being rather V-shaped scratches in the plate than square-cut are liable to partially fill up in steel-facing, and thus mar the work. It does seem marvelous that the scratches will admit of steel-facing, when often they are so faint that a half-dozen impressions without steeling will suffice to destroy the plate.



THE practical importance of the Dieulafoy discoveries of the ruins of Susa, so fully described about a year ago in the French *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, and more recently in *Harper's Magazine* by Madame Dieulafoy herself, is emphasized by the suggestion in an English journal that the great frieze of enameled pottery or majolica which adorned the palace of Darius the

Mede, may serve as a useful model for the adornment of the exterior of modern buildings, the material lending itself to modeling, to the greatest beauty of color, and having a surface easily kept clean, without necessarily being so smooth or so highly glazed as to reflect unpleasantly. Some of the English schools are promised, by the director-general of the Louvre, casts of a portion of the Frieze of Archers, colored like the original, and also bits of the original glazed bricks of all the colors used, and experiments are contemplated looking to the production of bricks of a similar kind.



AFTER withstanding for a long time the jealous bickerings of the Sèvres artists, and the attacks of the Radical press which they incited, the accomplished M. Lauth has resigned his position as director of the French National Porcelain Manufactory.

The resigned director is a refined and cultivated man, a most distinguished chemist, who has given to the manufactory means of producing colors absolutely new, and invented tones of decoration unknown up to his time. He has discovered a paste closely allied to the famous Chinese paste, and which allows the application of the richest and most varied colors; he has, in fact, given a special impetus to the works at Sèvres by pointing out to its artists the study of the marvelous art of the East, and bringing thence our modern æsthetic art. It is due to him that painting on porcelain derives its inspiration no longer exclusively from painting on canvas. He has thus accomplished a genuine artistic revolution.

Th. Deck, the great ceramist, Philippe Berty, and Guillaume, the sculptor, are each mentioned as possible successor to M. Lauth.



A MANCHESTER firm pays \$50,000 a year to Paris designers.



WHY china should be placed, as it certainly is, above glass is one of the most singular things in art manufactures. Glass has done much lately to reverse this opinion; let us hope it will correct itself, not to the injury of ceramic art, but simply to place glass artistically where it should be. Painting on glass was once an art of some

magnitude, and is worth reviving. In England it has been tried, but without commercial success; thirty years ago there was a fashion for Bohemian painted glass, which unfortunately died out—and though the French have been successful in producing artistic work, the demand is insignificant. Here is a field for American fashion to patronize something new, for to produce enamel paintings on glass requires the highest knowledge in vitrified colors, as well as care and perseverance in firing them, and pieces of this kind would always be rare and costly, and no cheap imitations could be made.



THE glass-workers of Venice had two advantages on their side, first, the raw material, which lent itself admirably to their needs and the nature of their work, for the ductility of their glass carried with it as a consequence the property of extreme lightness, especial brilliancy, and a vitreous appearance which is quite its own; the same ductility also rendered it possible to introduce into its colorless portions whatever shades and varieties of color had been invented by science and experience, and thus to impress upon the object, while keeping it in a state of partial fusion, the most varied forms which the taste, talent, ingenuity, or caprice of the artist dictated. To these fundamental conditions must be added the natural good taste of the Venetians of Murano, and the advantages of a historical tradition. Much patience, skill, care, and quickness are needed in the hand as well as in the mind of the workman, to avert the thousand accidents which may occur in the fabrication. Consider that all the manipulations of the glass are accomplished by the action of fire, to which every piece is submitted several times (up to fifty and sixty times even) before it is quite completed, and that the same furnace which has just enabled the workman to give life to his material, may the next moment destroy it by softening the glass again, and so changing its form. Imagine this man, often obliged to give up the outline he had first intended, and to bring to perfection a quite different one suggested by the necessities of the moment; and we shall then recognize the talent that is necessary to triumph over such obstacles. In other industries, such, for instance, as china and faience, the workman or artist, having to deal with cold and passive materials, can take

his own time, and work on with loving patience and care till he is completely satisfied ; here, on the contrary, all is sudden, rapid, and spontaneous, and that is the great difficulty of this beautiful art.

THE splendid bathing apartments with which the recently erected mansions of several wealthy New Yorkers and Bostonians are provided, recall those of ancient Rome. Few Roman citizens, in easy circumstances, were without the luxury of a private bath, and these were varied in construction according to the taste or prodigality of the owner, most magnificent and most numerous. Pliny mentions that the bathing-rooms for the ladies were paved with silver, and the metal flues of the hypocaustum were richly gilt and all elaborately colored. Like the ancient Greeks, the Romans were great lovers of the bath, but it was not until after the time of Scipio Africanus that baths were built and finished in a style of luxury almost incredible. A person was held to be poor or sordid whose baths did not shine with a profusion of the most precious materials — the marbles of Egypt inlaid with those of Numidia ; unless the walls were laboriously stuccoed in imitation of painting ; unless the chambers were covered with glass, the basins with the rare Thasian stone, and the water conveyed through silver pipes, and murmuring down steps and over floors of precious stones. Most of these materials are now employed to minister to the luxury of the bath of the American magnate, except the real precious stones, and the next ambitious decorator may supplement with them the charms of marbles, paintings, carvings, silver, electric lights, etc., which are already freely used.

THE names of Japanese earthenwares and porcelain are becoming less certain every year ; for, under the influence of the European customs and trade, districts that used only to make one particular kind of ware now make reproductions of any old ware they can find a market for. Among the best known is the "Satsuma," which used to be made in the southern part of Japan. It is of a creamy white paste, soft enough to be easily touched with a file. Old pieces, made only for presentation under the former princes, are very scarce ; they may be considered as typical of the old Japanese goods called *Nowa-Yake*, or made at home. In the old pieces the decoration and the gilding, which is done in gold leaf, differ from those of the modern pieces. The closest imitations are made at Otta, near Yokohama, at Awata, and at Kioto. This last place gives its name to a ware of inferior quality, though very pleasant in texture, which is extensively made for the export trade. The Kutani ware, made in the province of Kaga, is either red and gold, or green and yellow. The Hizen ware, which is identical with the Arita and the Imara (one name being that of the province, the second that of the factory, and the third that of the trade station where it is sold), consists of blue, white, and gold decoration, of varied style, on red clay covered with white enamel. The Seiji is a green *émail ombrant*. The Kasata and the Takatori resemble the *grès de Flandre*. The Awagi is a yellow *émail ombrant*. The Kiushia is an *émail ombrant*, light blue and purple. When fine, the two colors are perfect in tint, free from spots, and entirely distinct ; in inferior pieces they are often mixed at the edges. The *banko* is of clay, often partly glazed ; it is peculiar in bearing the imprint of the fingers of the workmen.

